

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY VETOES 'BILLBOARD BILL'

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley today vetoed House Bill 429, which requires local governments to pay cash for the removal of billboards. The bill will now be returned to the N.C. House of Representatives for reconsideration.

House Bill 429, among other provisions, requires local governments to make cash payment to billboard owners of up to five times the annual revenue generated by the billboard upon its removal. This bill could cost localities as much as \$240,000 to remove a single billboard in the Greensboro area and \$72,600 in Hendersonville.

“This bill would require excessive payment of taxpayer dollars by our cities and counties that may prohibit communities from acting to relocate or remove these signs,” said Easley. “I support fair compensation for the owners of billboards, but this formula is unfair to the cities, the counties and the taxpayers. It also effectively prohibits local governments from enacting their own rules regarding billboards and creates a windfall for the billboard industry. I believe a reasonable compromise can be reached that is fair to all parties.”

The text of Easley’s Objections and Veto Message follows:

I support fair compensation for the owners of billboards that are removed by localities. I urge the General Assembly to find a reasonable compensation formula because this bill does not accomplish that goal. The formula provided in this legislation is unfair and overly burdensome to city and county governments and the taxpayers they represent. Further, it raises constitutional questions. Therefore, I veto the bill.

Today’s veto is Easley’s fourth. In November 2002, he vetoed S.B. 1283 related to unqualified appointments to various boards and commissions. In June 2003 he vetoed S.B. 931 which stripped the State Board of Education of its authority to set teacher standards. In August 2003, he vetoed H.B. 917 which raised fees charged by finance companies.

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